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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
TO THE EMBASSIES IN VILNIUS AND KYIV FOR EMBASSY MINSK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/01/2020

TAGS: [BO](#) [KREC](#) [PGOV](#)

SUBJECT: DIPLOMATIC NOTE PROPOSING RECIPROCAL LIFTING OF
40 KM TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON EMBASSY PERSONNEL IN MINSK

Classified By: LSILVERMAN

11. This is an action request. See paragraph 3.

12. (C) In a diplomatic note dated March 31, 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus imposed a requirement to provide 24-hour prior notification of all U.S. Embassy staff internal travel outside of a 40-km zone from the center of Minsk. On July 2, 2008, solely on the basis of reciprocity, the Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) imposed similar restrictions on accredited employees of the Embassy of Belarus in Washington and the Consulate General in New York City. On January 8, 2009, OFM issued a second note updating the restrictions to require notification by family members of accredited employees as well. These restrictions were not imposed in response to security concerns, but solely in response to GoB restrictions on travel by our staff.

On December 31, 2009, Embassy Minsk Charg received assurances from Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Aleinik that if the United States removes the travel restrictions on Belarusian officials in Washington and New York City, Belarus would remove similar restrictions on U.S. officials in Minsk.

Greater freedom to travel would improve the ability of Embassy staff to meet interlocutors, report on events across the country, and generally perform their required duties. The FBI has informed OFM that it has no objection to the removal of the controls on the basis of reciprocity.

13. (SBU) Action request: Embassy Minsk is requested to pass the diplomatic note below to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and notify the Department when a response is received.

Begin diplomatic note:

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and refers the Ministry to the Ministry's Note 6579 dated March 31, 2008, addressed to this Embassy, to the Department's Note 08-110 of July 2, 2008, addressed to the Embassy of Belarus in Washington, D.C., and to the Department's Note 09-02 of January 8, 2009, also addressed to the Embassy of Belarus in Washington. Note 6579 imposed travel restrictions on staff of this Embassy, and the Department's Notes 08-110 and 09-02 imposed similar restrictions on the travel by members of the staff of the Embassy of Belarus in Washington and the Consulate General of Belarus in New York, as well as on family members of such staff.

The U.S. Embassy is pleased to refer to recent diplomatic conversations indicating a mutual willingness to remove such travel restrictions and would like to inform the Ministry that the Department of State of the United States is prepared to remove such restrictions on members of the staff, and related family members, of the Embassy of Belarus in Washington and the Consulate General of Belarus in New York based on the Ministry simultaneously lifting the Government

of Belarus,s restrictions on staff of the U.S. Embassy and related family members.

On this basis, the U.S. Embassy proposes that, upon receipt of a note from the Ministry confirming the understanding outlined above, such restrictions would be removed, simultaneously, on the third business day following the receipt of said note by the U.S. Embassy. For example, if said note is received on Monday, all such restrictions on U.S. staff and family members in Belarus and on staff and family members of the Embassy and Consulate General of Belarus in the United States would be eliminated as of opening of business on Thursday in our respective countries.

The Embassy of the United States avails itself of this opportunity to renew assurances of its highest regard.

End diplomatic note.
CLINTON